

VZCZCXRO6941  
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHSQ #0416/01 1451533  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 251533Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6101  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHSQ/USDAO SKOPJE MK  
RUESEN/SKOPJE BETA  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2113  
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SKOPJE 000416

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SCE, WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC (BERT BRAUN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: SCENESETTER FOR POTUS LUNCH WITH A-3  
PRIME MINISTERS IN TIRANA, JUNE 10

REF: BRAUN-MILOVANOVIC EMAIL 5/21/07

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES PAUL D. WOHLERS, REASONS 1.4(B) & (D).

¶1. (C) Now in his ninth month in office, Prime Minister Gruevski will arrive in Tirana hoping for an encouraging message on NATO membership and looking for U.S. recognition of Macedonia's GWOT efforts and its constructive stance on Kosovo. It would be useful for him to hear a strong message on the name dispute with Greece, especially as it relates to Macedonia's NATO candidacy. Gruevski hopes to visit Washington in September and is likely to ask for a White House meeting.

#### NATO MEMBERSHIP

¶2. (C) Drawing on Greek media reports, the local press has been churning out stories recently suggesting that President Bush will offer Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia NATO membership during the June 10 Tirana meeting. PM Gruevski has dismissed the stories in public. He knows that the best he can hope for is recognition of Macedonia's progress on meeting NATO membership criteria and a reiteration of NATO's open door policy. He expects to hear a strong message regarding the need to work with all parties to consolidate political stability; Qtep up efforts to implement NATO membership-related reforms, including key elements of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement; and to redouble efforts to strengthen rule of law by effectively combating high-profile corruption and implementing judicial reforms. He is close to finalizing an agreement with the main ethnic Albanian opposition party that would improve political dialogue in Macedonia.

¶3. (SBU) With 90 percent of Macedonians favoring NATO membership, Gruevski will ask for assurances of U.S. support for membership if the government meets the challenges outlined above. He also will underscore the importance of NATO membership as a guarantor of regional stability while Kosovo's final status is being implemented. Gruevski is likely to mention that Macedonia will host the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Security Summit in late June in the historic city of Ohrid, which will give the government a chance to showcase its organizational skills. Key messages for Gruevski:

--We want you to succeed in your NATO bid. Much to do, but we believe you can do it. Requires political will.

--Need to demonstrate the political maturity expected of a NATO candidate. Show concrete results in implementing the Framework Agreement to enhance inter-ethnic relations. Redouble efforts to combat corruption.

#### GWOT EFFORTS

14. (C) Macedonia contributes troops to NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan and to international operations in Iraq; its troops also are serving with the EU peace support mission in Bosnia. Macedonia's soldiers have performed exceptionally well, and have received US military decorations for valor in Iraq. Macedonian participation in Iraq and Afghanistan has strong support across party lines. The Parliament routinely and unanimously approves troop deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq, and did not balk when Macedonia recently doubled its troop deployments to Afghanistan. Macedonia also removed all significant caveats on its troops participating in those operations. We believe Macedonia has contributed as many troops as it can afford to in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that additional deployments could undermine the excellent progress the Defense Ministry has made in carrying out the defense reforms required for NATO membership. Key message:

--Appreciate your contributions to GWOT operations in Iraq and Afghanistan -- your troops are performing well and you should be proud of them. Urge continued support of those operations.

SKOPJE 00000416 002 OF 003

#### KOSOVO POLICY -- CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

15. (C) The GOM has given constructive and consistent support to the Kosovo status process and maintains positive ties with Pristina. It is particularly pleased with the Ahtisaari proposal's language on demarcation of the Macedonia-Kosovo border delineated in a 2001 Skopje-Belgrade agreement. The government's main concern is how best to time recognition of an independent Kosovo. The government prefers not to be in the vanguard of countries recognizing Kosovo, fearing a strong Serbian backlash, but also is wary of offending Pristina by bringing up the rear. PM Gruevski's May 17 visit to Pristina, in which he publicly reiterated support for the Ahtisaari Plan and for a UNSCR to implement it, further underscored Macedonia's constructive engagement on Kosovo. Kosovo PM Ceku is expected to visit Skopje in early June to meet with the Gruevski government to explore additional areas of cooperation. Key messages:

--Appreciate your constructive engagement with Pristina. Important for Kosovo to have a stable neighbor on its southern flank as status is implemented.

--Macedonia has important lessons to share with Kosovo regarding its experiences in implementing decentralization, and as a multi-ethnic democratic state.

#### NAME ISSUE

16. (C) The recent renaming of Skopje's airport as "Alexander the Great Airport" has been an irritant in relations between Athens and Skopje, with Athens accusing the GOM of trying to steal Greece's historical heritage. The GOM has since maintained a low profile on the issue. The government supports continued discussions on the name issue in the context of the UN talks in New York, but is standing fast on its "dual name" proposal to Athens -- e.g., one mutually agreed-upon name for use in Macedonia-Greece relations, and the constitutional name for use in all other bilateral and multilateral fora. Gruevski is likely to thank President Bush for his November 2004 decision to recognize Macedonia's

constitutional name for use in our bilateral communications.  
Key message:

--Continue to support the UN process for reaching a mutually-agreed resolution of the name issue; avoid further provocations toward Athens in the meantime. You will need Greek support for your NATO candidacy -- avoid allowing the name issue to get in the way of that support.

#### ECONOMY

17. (SBU) Having campaigned in 2006 on an economic growth platform, Gruevski will want to highlight some of his economic reforms, including a government decision this year to slash personal income and profit taxes to 12 percent, with a further cut to 10 percent in 2008, to spur both foreign and domestic investment. He may also mention his "regulatory guillotine," which aims to eliminate government redtape for businesses, and the "one stop shop" that has simplified the new business registration process. With one major US firm having broken ground last year on a "greenfield" investment in Macedonia's free trade zone, Gruevski is likely to mention his government's desire for more US direct investment to stimulate economic growth. Key message:

--Pleased to see economic reforms, which are in line with USG approaches to economic growth and development around the world. Important to build a stable political environment, and to demonstrate respect for rule of law, as foundations upon which economic growth can further expand.

#### GRUEVSKI IN WASHINGTON?

18. (C) Finally, Gruevski is likely to mention his desire to visit Washington in September or October, slightly more than a year after he first took office in August of 2006, and to ask for a White House visit during his stay. We have advised Gruevski and his staff that he first should assemble a

SKOPJE 00000416 003 OF 003

package of notable achievements (concluding the political agreement with the opposition, showing real progress on Framework Agreement implementation, bringing high-profile corruption cases to trial and securing solid convictions and deterrent sentences) before he asks for a meeting with the President. He is making progress, but is not there yet.  
WOHLERS